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# Vision in Action



**Planning Partnership**  
HAMILTON COUNTY  
Regional Planning Commission





The Planning Partnership is a collaborative initiative of the Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission. The Partnership – open to all political jurisdictions in the county and to affiliate members in the public, private and civic sectors – is an advisory board that works to harness the collective energy and vision of its members to effectively plan for the future of our county. Rather than engaging in the Planning Commission's short-range functions such as zoning reviews, the Planning Partnership takes a long-range, comprehensive approach to planning, working to build a community that works for families, for businesses and for the region. The Partnership firmly believes that collaboration is the key to a positive, competitive and successful future for Hamilton County.

*Mission:  
To bring  
together  
public, private  
and civic sector  
organizations  
engaged in  
community planning  
in Hamilton County  
so that mutual goals  
related to physical,  
economic and  
social issues  
can be planned  
for comprehensively  
and achieved collaboratively.*



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## Vision in Action

### An Open Letter to Visionaries and People of Action

To the people of Hamilton County:

Effective planning is active planning. It takes the biggest of ideas and the smallest of details; it takes a lot of talking and still more listening; it takes visionaries and it takes people of action.

Happily, we have all of that and more in the Planning Partnership, a wonderful mix of public, private and civic sector organizations united in doing what is right for Hamilton County's long-term future.

At the top of that list is collaboration. This is the heart of the Planning Partnership. The 49 political jurisdictions in the county do not live in isolation of the region, but rather comprise the very lifeblood that drives our region. Each entity is unique and valued. Each entity is vital to the whole. And each entity's long-term success depends, to a large degree, upon the success of the whole. It makes perfect sense that we cooperate and collaborate to create a county that achieves our common physical, economic and social goals.

The Planning Partnership supports local autonomy on local issues while promoting collaboration on countywide issues. We work together on issues that affect all of us – as individuals, as a county, as a region. We work together to address population loss. We work together to compete economically as a region. We work together to coordinate land use and achieve balance. We work together to impact policy and funding for the region. We work together to build a positive, competitive and successful future for Hamilton County and its residents.

In the short amount of time that the Planning Partnership has been in existence, it already has evolved into a cooperative planning group that encompasses 80 percent of the county by area and 90 percent of the county by population. The Partnership includes political jurisdictions, civic groups, business groups, trade organizations and social service umbrella organizations. It includes committees and task forces that focus on everything from funding strategies to marketing, from stormwater management to capital improvements. It includes dedicated men and women tightly focused on the long term.

And already, that long-term focus is having an impact, both on the county overall and on the multiple jurisdictions within the county. Through training programs, data collection and analysis, reports, forums and constant dialogue, the Planning Partnership has shared and developed resources. We have shared and developed talent. We have shared and developed the beginnings of a vision for Hamilton County's future.

That's something in which all of us can – and should – take a great deal of pride. Planning seldom results in instant successes. It is, instead, an incremental process, a continuing movement toward an achievable future. Together, we are making that forward progress. On housing. On the environment. On land use. On resources.

Much remains to be done. But as we wrap up one year and look forward to the next, we can't help but be excited about the possibilities for our county. Through our jurisdiction members and affiliate members, through grants and donations, through volunteers and concerned citizens, through the growing involvement of new jurisdictions and new organizations, the Planning Partnership is more than just vision. It is vision in action.

*Gwen McFarlin*  
Gwen McFarlin  
Chairwoman  
Springfield Township representative

*Pete Witte*  
Pete Witte  
Chairman-elect  
City of Cincinnati representative

*Richard Huddleston*  
Richard Huddleston  
Vice chairman  
City of Springdale representative





# Public Interest, Private Support

The collaborative spirit of the Planning Partnership goes far beyond government groups and professional planners. It strikes at the very heart of our community: The people and businesses that make our county work.

"Partnerships and joint ventures are what make American business strong and flexible in today's fast-moving global economy by pooling resources to respond to their client's (the market) ever-changing needs," said Richard Huddleston, partner of the Miller-Valentine Group and vice chairman of the Planning Partnership. "It is no different in the many successful public/private ventures that already are in place to respond to America's changing economic and social landscape.

## Looking Back, Looking Ahead

In just its second full year, the Planning Partnership already has begun to have a meaningful impact on the future of Hamilton County. Some of the highlights from the year just passed, as well as the expectations for the year ahead, include:

- The first-ever Countywide Town Meeting, a forum of 1,300 people who gathered in January 2002 for Community COMPASS, the Comprehensive Master Plan and Strategies for Hamilton County
- A grant from the Kettering Foundation that helped create a shared understanding of collaborative decision-making among elected officials as the county moves forward with Community COMPASS
- An exhaustive comparative financial analysis of the cost of government services in all 49 jurisdictions, which began in 2002 and should be complete in early 2003, giving jurisdiction officials a valuable benchmarking and planning tool
- The creation of the Stormwater Management Education Task Force, which developed and launched a free education program to help jurisdictions comply with state and federal mandates that go into effect in March 2003
- The development of the semiannual "Making Great Communities" Certified Planning Commissioners' Program, which already has helped scores of citizen planners prepare their communities for the future
- Grants in 2002 from the Regional Initiatives Fund and the Greater Cincinnati Home Builders Association to help promote "Making Great Communities"
- The launch of a study that examines the external influences likely to impact Hamilton County over the next 50 years
- A new focus and support for revitalization of aging neighborhoods, which began with meetings in 2002 and will continue with committee work and action in 2003
- The addition in 2002 of two new jurisdictions and four new organizations to the Planning Partnership's membership roster, and the invitation for individuals to join as Friends of the Partnership

These are win-win situations, and business needs to be involved."

Hamilton County is fortunate to have a business community that is actively engaged. Leaders from some of our top companies have stepped forward to improve our schools, to improve our social climate and to improve our region's competitiveness in a global marketplace. It is precisely this involvement that our county and the Planning Partnership need to continue to move forward.

The Planning Partnership welcomes this involvement...from individuals, from businesses and from organizations. The success of the Partnership's initiatives, in fact, depends on it.

We all have a stake in our future. And we all can have a seat at the table.

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## Planning Partnership

HAMILTON COUNTY  
Regional Planning Commission

The Planning Partnership - Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission  
138 E. Court Street, Room 807, Cincinnati, OH 45202  
Phone 513-946-4500 • Fax 513-946-4475 • www.planningpartnership.org

### Membership

The Planning Partnership encompasses a broad range of jurisdictions and affiliate members:

<b>Jurisdiction members</b>	Glendale	Springdale	Greater Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce
Anderson Township	Green Township	Springfield Township	Home Builders Association of Greater Cincinnati
Blue Ash	Greenhills	Sycamore Township	League of Women Voters
Board of Hamilton County Commissioners	Harrison Township	Symmes Township	Ohio Valley Development Council
Cincinnati	Loveland	Village of Indian Hill	The United Way & Community Chest
Cleves	Mariemont	Wyoming	Western Economic Council
Colerain Township	Miami Township	<b>Affiliate members</b>	Jackson Township, Clermont County
Columbia Township	Milford	Cincinnati-Hamilton County Community Action Agency	The Land Conservancy of Hamilton County
Deer Park	Montgomery	Cincinnati	Junior League of Cincinnati
Delhi Township	North Bend	Citizens for Civic Renewal	
Fairfax	Norwood		
Forest Park	Sharonville		
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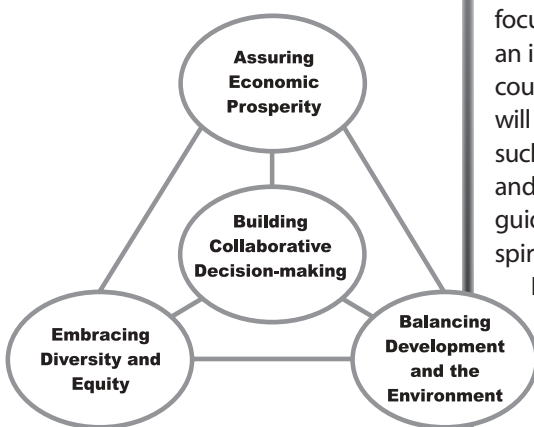
John Gillespie, Director of Marketing & Development, UC Physicians

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Pictured from left to right:  
John Gillespie, Director of Marketing & Development, UC Physicians  
J. Randolph Hillard M.D., President & CEO, UC Physicians  
Dan Gahl, Administrator, UC Physicians  
Jack Goodwin, Partner, Miller-Valentine Group

# Initiatives Work to Build Stronger Ties,

*Community COMPASS is a collaborative effort to develop a broad, long-term vision for Hamilton County. The four core goals of Community COMPASS are interrelated:*



*Strategies and tactics have been developed to correlate with these goals. In addition to Community COMPASS, other key initiatives of the Planning Partnership include:*

- *Cost of Government Services Survey*
- *Building Collaborative Decision-Making*
- *Stormwater Management*
- *Education Task Force*
- *Revitalization of Aging Neighborhoods*
- *"Making Great Communities"*
- *Certified Planning Commissioners' Program*
- *Future Influences Report*
- *Great Partners in Planning Award*

**B**etter planning makes better communities, and the more we collaborate as distinct jurisdictions united for the common good of the county, the stronger our county will be. The many initiatives of the Planning Partnership leverage the strength of collective vision in action:

## Community COMPASS

Community COMPASS, or the Comprehensive Master Plan and Strategies for Hamilton County, is a groundbreaking alliance of government, planning, civic and private organizations and individuals focused on planning our future. Through an in-depth analysis of all aspects of the county, the multiyear COMPASS process will result in a comprehensive plan, the first such plan for Hamilton County since 1964, and the first achieved in the spirit that guides the Planning Partnership...the spirit of collaboration.

In developing a broad vision with broad support, COMPASS will ensure that trends are anticipated, that challenges are addressed, that priorities are focused and that our collective future is planned strategically, with full consideration given to all the potential impacts one project can have on another aspect of community life.

Early in the process, COMPASS gathered input and ideas from throughout Hamilton County. Then, on Jan. 12, 2002, more than 1,300 people came together at the first Countywide Town Meeting to set the course for Hamilton County's future. The four core goals that emerged were assuring economic prosperity, embracing diversity and equity, balancing development and the environment, and building collaborative decision-making.

In the months since the meeting, COMPASS action teams, or CATs, have developed objectives and strategies that correlate with these goals. The dialogue continues as issues, trends and recommendations are analyzed and refined to work toward a future that can be achieved. Specifically, implementation teams soon will be focusing on prioritized strategies for achieving the adopted goals and objectives.

The implementation teams will be supported by professional research on:

- Economy
- Environment
- Governance
- Housing
- Land use
- Population
- Public facilities and services
- Special planning areas
- Transportation

Reports on each of these areas are being prepared, outlining conditions, trends, opportunities, and resources for

improving or sustaining quality of life.

These individual reports will lay the groundwork for an overall State of the County analysis and will provide support for refining action strategies.

Achieving the Community COMPASS vision will involve decision-making among numerous groups, as well as collaboration among various stakeholders. Implementation groups will facilitate the dialogue that is necessary for success, and performance indicators will track whether initiatives are having the desired outcomes, and whether outcomes are sustainable.

The eventual Comprehensive Master Plan that will result is a long-term initiative – both in terms of the process and the impact. Public and private input will continue each step of the way, and final decisions will rest with the 49 separate jurisdictions represented in Hamilton County and the Board of Hamilton County Commissioners.

## Cost of Government Services Survey

Basic government services are crucial for the success of any community, and every community must effectively plan for the future of those services. Cost considerations, obviously, are part of that process. To help benchmark for future planning – and to help communities identify trends, challenges and opportunities — the Planning Partnership initiated a Cost of

Government Services Study in 2002.

This unique and comprehensive study examined four years' worth of data on revenue and expenditure trends, revenue stream stability and intergovernmental financial relationships for all 49 jurisdictions in the county. Looking for an apples-to-apples comparison on the cost of services such as general government administration, road maintenance, police and fire protection, emergency medical service, recreation and capital improvements, the Planning Partnership painstakingly collected information on tax collection, rollbacks, grants, fees, investment income, government assistance, assessments and debt. The Planning Partnership also gathered data on expense categories including personnel, contracts, operations, capital and other costs.

The resulting analysis will provide lasting value on several fronts, including:

- A baseline report that can be used as a benchmark for future financial planning
- Increased understanding of public financing structures and interdependence
- Identification of regional expenditures and resource trends
- A detailed look at the history and importance of state intergovernmental transfers, which can help jurisdictions and the Planning Partnership develop policy recommendations that maximize financial resources
- Information that will help local juris-



Joe Simon Photography

The Countywide Town Meeting in Hamilton County. The dial-



# Stronger Communities

dictions make decisions on land use and budgeting

- Identification of potential collaborative opportunities among jurisdictions
- Comprehensive data for each jurisdiction, as well as a big-picture view of Hamilton County

The Planning Partnership will present a draft report to all participating jurisdictions in a series of meetings beginning early this year. At these meetings, feedback will be collected and incorporated in a final report to the Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission.

The final report, however, will signal just the beginning of the benefits communities can derive from this study. The Cost of Government Services Study is a starting point, a place where officials can turn to track revenues and expenditures, a place where they can begin to develop indicators that will help forecast fiscal health or fiscal strength, a place where they can go for potential solutions to common issues.

## Building Collaborative Decision-Making

Ever since its inception, the Planning Partnership has been building a future for our county based on collaboration. It isn't always easy, and it isn't always perfect, but without question it is inclusive. Down to its very core.



In January 2002 drew more than 1,300 people from across the region on the resulting initiatives continues to take place.

Collaborative decision-making is the foundation of Community COMPASS, and it was essential as the project moved forward that elected officials had a shared understanding of the meaning of collaborative decision-making. To that end, the Planning Partnership hosted a series of roundtable discussions to frame the issue of collaborative decision-making and find common ground.

A cross-section of community leaders and elected officials attended the forums, approaching the issue from four perspectives:

- Working within the local authority of local jurisdictions
- Building strong regional governance
- Driving public policy through public involvement in governance
- Creating voluntary strategic partnerships

The discussion helped this vital group of people connect on various levels to gain an appreciation for diverse opinions, find common ground and identify strategies for advancing the issue. The roundtables also provided valuable feedback for the Partnership and helped build trust in the COMPASS process.

The Partnership, in conjunction with ChangeWorks of the Heartland, conducted this additional outreach to elected officials through a \$16,000 grant from the Kettering Foundation. This grant recognizes the expertise and leadership of Planning Partnership in forging a new relationship with citizenry and elected officials. It also helps validate the benefits of a planning process that embraces diversity of backgrounds, opinions and jurisdictions to create a big-picture vision for the county.

## Stormwater Management Education Task Force

New state and national guidelines on stormwater management have created a sense of urgency in effectively managing stormwater disposal. Local governments are to submit permit applications and implementation plans to the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency by March 10, 2003, to comply with federal mandates. The threat of prison for non-compliance – along with the possibility of steep fines for communities for each day they don't comply — adds dramatically to the sense of urgency.

The Planning Partnership's Stormwater Management Education Task Force helps ease the burden. With volunteers from the Planning Partnership Program Committee, CDS Associates Inc., F.M.S.M. Engineers Inc., the Hamilton County Soil & Water Conservation District, the Hamilton County Wet Weather Initiative, the Mill Creek Restoration Project and the Mill Creek Valley Watershed Council, the Task Force

*continued on page 7*

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# Community Voices Address Challenges, Opportunities



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Nick  
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Richard  
Huddleston



Laura  
Long

Just as effective planning is a matter of vision, it also is a matter of voices... varied and numerous, passionate and engaged. Here, in question-and-answer format, are some of the voices of our community, along with their thoughts on the Planning Partnership and the future of Hamilton County.

**Q:** What are the major issues facing Hamilton County right now, and how can the Planning Partnership address these issues?

**A:** "I think the major issue is the out-migration of people and jobs. I think the Planning Partnership should work as a region to stop that."

-- John S. Dowlin, Commissioner,  
Hamilton County Board of Commissioners

**Q:** What can groups like the Planning Partnership do to stem population loss from Hamilton County?

**A:** "Reversing population loss in Hamilton County requires a suite of policies and programs acting over many years. A critical task of the Planning Partnership and affiliate organizations will be to figure out which options will be most effective and politically achievable, and then build alliances to sustain the selected initiatives. The Planning Partnership, through Community COMPASS, will identify relocation decision factors that can be controlled (e.g., recreation, schools, sense of place). Then, the Partnership can collaborate to achieve desired changes that will reverse population loss in older communities. Reversing population loss may require an incentive-based state investment program that targets state growth-related expenditures (such as roads and sewers) to established communities."

-- Ron Miller, AICP, Executive Director,  
Hamilton County Regional Planning  
Commission; Secretary, Planning Partnership

## The Vision

The work and initiatives of the Planning Partnership are made possible through the support of the Hamilton County General Fund and membership fees. The Partnership leverages these resources through various grants and awards that support the mission of the organization.

2002 grantors included the Kettering Foundation, the Regional Initiatives Fund, the Seansgood Foundation, Fifth Third Bank and the Greater Cincinnati Home Builders Association. Additionally, friends such as the Miller-Valentine Group and Anchor Associates Inc. have provided generous financial support.

The vision of the Planning Partnership is that all governments and planning commissions in Hamilton County:

**Q:** How does the Planning Partnership fit into other collaborative efforts in our region?

**A:** "The success of our region at retaining, expanding and attracting jobs is directly tied to our ability to collaborate in areas of mutual concern and opportunity. The Planning Partnership is an important forum to ensure dialogue and thoughtful, careful exploration among diverse groups of people of critical issues impacting economic growth throughout this region."

-- Michael Fisher, President,  
Greater Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce

**Q:** Generally, what do you think really drives planning right now? Do you see those influencers evolving?

**A:** "Most of the thinking that goes on in regards to regional planning comes from a variety of civic-minded groups and individuals, as well as the Regional Planning Commission. It is vital that the decision-makers are at the table and are active participants in these discussions. Just as important as having the decision-makers on board is having the community involved."

-- Ohio Rep. Steven L. Driehaus, D-Cincinnati

**A:** "I think it is an unfortunate fact that most planning is motivated by self-interest only. The challenge for the Planning Partnership is to redefine self-interest in an enlightened way through a symbiotic process. Having many of these issues born of self-respect and mutual respect is the best way to go and will ultimately serve everyone's interest if done right."

-- Ohio Rep. Bill Seitz, R-Cincinnati

**Q:** How does the Planning Partnership relate to the Partnership for Greater Cincinnati? Do they work together, or should they work together?

**A:** "The scope of the Partnership for Greater Cincinnati (PGC) is 13 counties in three states -- the region known as

Cincinnati USA. Each PGC member understands that the vitality of the region is directly related to the health of the core. The work of the Planning Partnership is not only critical to Hamilton County, but to all of Cincinnati USA. We have been and plan to continue to be involved."

-- Nick Vehr, Vice President,  
Economic Development,  
Greater Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce

**Q:** Some of the Planning Partnership's initiatives are controversial. Why is that, and how will that controversy affect future initiatives?

**A:** "The issues are controversial because they challenge the old parochial ways of doing things. Our political jurisdictions and the county itself are not isolated islands within our region. Whether we in Hamilton County prosper or continue to decline will ultimately be determined by how well we cooperate on symbiotic issues in the future. The Planning Partnership cannot and should not try to stop 'sprawl,' however that is defined. Our charge, rather, is to create the vision and put in place processes that encourage multi-jurisdictional cooperation. By coming together, we can create a vibrant urban core that competes on its own merits to retain and grow our population and economic base."

-- Richard Huddleston, Vice Chairman,  
the Planning Partnership

**Q:** How can planners on the Ohio side of the river work more effectively with planners on the Kentucky side to create a stronger region overall?

**A:** "By understanding a regional context when making decisions within their own constituency. This requires constant dialogue to better accentuate a shared regional vision."

-- Laura Long, Executive Director,  
Cincinnati Business Committee

- Work together effectively to resolve issues related to growth management, land use, green space, transportation, housing, public services, utilities and other cross-jurisdictional issues
- Effectively communicate among all levels of the public, private and civic sectors
- Build consensus on a unified, comprehensive community vision for Hamilton County
- Create and implement local and countywide plans through continuous and collaborative planning relationships
- Plan for and achieve efficient use of our physical, economic and social resources and assets
- Determine, achieve and sustain local goals

- and plans within a regional framework
- Use local authority and government closest to the people to create and implement community-based solutions to local problems
- Make informed decisions through consideration of local and countywide comprehensive plans
- Use a countywide database to support the comprehensive planning needs of local and county government
- Leverage collaborative power to improve funding and policy change at all levels of government

To help support this vision through funding or expertise, please call 513-946-4500.





The Stormwater Management Education Task Force helps local governments deal with the complex guidelines of stormwater management.

offers free presentations to demonstrate that stormwater is as much a resource as a vulnerability. Participants run through a real-life development scenario, review tips on best practices, and receive fact sheets, site development examples and a list of available resources. Thirteen jurisdictions participated in the program during 2002.

“The Planning Partnership’s program was an excellent resource for Colerain Township,” said Assistant Administrator Frank Birkenhauer, who attended the program in his community along with other township staff and elected and appointed officials. “It explained a complex issue in simple terms, helping our officials become more confident and more effective in stormwater management. Everyone who participated in the program took away something they could incorporate into their jobs for the good of the township.”

The volunteer Stormwater Management Education Task Force was developed in response to interest from members of the Planning Partnership, and it is another way the Partnership can tap the resources of member planners to benefit the county.

### Revitalization of Aging Neighborhoods

Just as a healthy urban core is essential to a healthy region, so is a healthy “first ring” of suburban communities and townships. These communities – mature neighborhoods outside the central city – were the very first suburbs of Cincinnati, the first areas to develop as people and industry moved outward from the urban core. Now, many of these suburbs are experiencing an exodus themselves as the middle class flees for newer suburbs. Additionally, they face other challenges that previously had been faced by the central city: disinvestment, aging homes and deteriorating infrastructure.

Members of the Planning Partnership view the vitality of suburbs as paramount to the overall success of Hamilton County’s future. For that reason, the Partnership developed a series of workshops geared toward the Revitalization of Aging Neighborhoods. These discussions provided ways to rejuvenate residential and business districts in first-ring suburbs. Guest speakers provided information and identified resources, and offered ideas on enhancing current programs through collaboration. Among the recommenda-

tions: develop a toolkit for communities struggling through these issues; establish neighborhood programs that foster pride and ownership; partner more across jurisdictions to become a stronger player regionally; communicate more about available resources and policies. The revitalization of first-ring suburbs is one of the priority initiatives in Community COMPASS.

Over the coming months, the Planning Partnership will jump-start the Greyfields Committee, whose purpose is to support redevelopment and reinvestment in older communities. This Committee will explore trends that are occurring in Hamilton County’s older or inner-ring suburbs, identify common problems as well as assets and challenges, and promote the development of policy approaches and working alliances. The Committee will identify and track key social and economic indicators to increase understanding of the context in which greyfield communities operate, and report on our extent of progress.

### Certification for Planning Commissioners

With 49 separate communities, Hamilton County governments have more than 300 planning commissioners. In the past, most of these citizen planners have learned about planning “on the job,” with little or no real training. The Planning Partnership has solved this problem with its short course: “Making Great Communities” – Certified Planning Commissioners’ Program.

This 16-hour workshop focuses on the basic principles of planning, zoning, meeting management and analytical skills.



Participants receive hands-on training from University of Cincinnati planning faculty,

experienced professional planners and experts in real estate law and land use. In addition to case studies, idea sharing and presentations, participants also join a mock planning session in which their skills can be put to the test. At the end of the workshop, participants receive a certificate of completion from the University of Cincinnati and the Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission, a packet of resource materials and a planning handbook.

During the last fiscal year, 65 people from 20 communities participated in the program, and two additional sessions are planned for the current fiscal year. Participants report a greater understanding of the process, a deeper appreciation for the procedures and a higher level of skill and productivity in getting the job done. The real benefit of this program, however, may be best described by one of last year’s participants, who said, “I’m now aware that planning commissioners have a great opportunity to make a difference.”

### Future Influences Report

The Hamilton County of 50 years ago is not the Hamilton County of today. Nor will today’s Hamilton County be the Hamilton County of 2053.

Yet it is a given that certain external forces have shaped the look and the feel of where we live now. The 1956 Interstate Highway Act. Federal Housing Administration mortgage financing. The de-industrialization of central cities. These are among the top 10 influences on the American Metropolis of the past 50 years, as identified in a 1999 Fannie Mae Foundation survey. Undoubtedly, they are among the top influences on the Hamilton County metropolis as well.

What about the next 50 years? What are the top future influences that will shape tomorrow’s America? Tomorrow’s Hamilton County? And how can we use these influences to more effectively plan our future? That is the focus of the Future Influences Report.

The Planning Partnership is analyzing each of the top 10 anticipated national external forces identified in the Fannie Mae Foundation report – trends such as the growing disparities of wealth, a suburban political majority, the aging of the Baby Boomers and increasing racial diversity in cities and suburbs – as they relate to Hamilton County. In the Future Influences Report, the Planning Partnership will look at each national future influence and ask:

- What is the local trend?
- Why is it important?
- What is being done to address this?
- What other actions could be considered?
- What are the key indicators we should use to measure our progress?
- With what groups are collaborations taking place or needed?

- What resources exist for further study?

In asking these questions, the Planning Partnership hopes to find answers to sound planning for the future, planning that examines the intended and unintended consequences of national, state and local policies and actions; planning that acts in concert with the forces that shape us, rather than reacting to each new influence as it materializes. While we may not be able to change influences such as the Internet and shrinking household size, we must recognize these external driving forces and plan to address their anticipated impacts.

### Great Partners in Planning Award

All of the progress of the Planning Partnership, and indeed, all of the progress of our community, reflect a team effort. Individual men and women working together for the good of the county are making a difference every day.

At the Planning Partnership’s annual meeting in March 2002, the group honored 20 such individuals whose skill, dedication and commitment qualify them as Great Partners in Planning.

Honored for leadership roles were John S. Dowlin, founding father of the Planning Partnership; Jay Buchert, Planning Partnership interim chairman 2000-2001; Dick Huddleston, Planning Partnership chairman 2001-2002; Bob Schuler, Planning Partnership Executive Committee chairman 2001-2002; Jim Wuenker and Jacqueline McCray, Community COMPASS co-chairs; and Mel Martin, Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission chairman, 2001.

Honored for outstanding collaboration and volunteer service were Joanne Gerson, Program Committee chair and Executive Committee member; Paulette Leeper, Organizational Strategy Committee chair and Executive Committee member; Hal Franke, Bylaws/Governance Committee chair and Executive Committee member; Curt Paddock, Program Committee member and Membership Committee member; Deanna Kuennen, Josh Whitehead and Terry Vanderman, all Program Committee members; and Carlos Greene, Rodney Brown, Jenny Laster, Brandon Wiers, Steve Dana and Sandy Kerlin, all members of the COMPASS Steering Team.

Additionally, the Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission annually bestows the Frank F. Ferris Award. This award, given at the Planning Partnership’s annual meeting, honors a public or private business group, municipality or township in Hamilton County for a project that demonstrates planning excellence. The Frank F. Ferris Award is named for the first mayor of the city of Blue Ash. Last year’s winner was Madeira, whose Miami Avenue beautification plan demonstrated innovation and community collaboration. Nominations for the next honoree are due February 24, 2003.

# Let Your Voice Be Heard

*"The Planning Partnership is an excellent opportunity for regional collaboration...It provides our cities, villages, townships and county government with a forum in which they may come together and accomplish big-picture planning and long-term visioning."*

*"The Planning Partnership is a catalyst for positive change in Hamilton County... You know the old saying, 'If you're not part of the solution, you're part of the problem.'"*

*"People downtown, people in Montgomery and people in Harrison all want the same thing: a safe, healthy, dynamic community. All of us have common issues and goals. Together, I really think we can make a difference."*

*"The Planning Partnership is now a vibrant and vital part of Hamilton County's future."*

**T**here truly is strength in numbers.

"The Planning Partnership is an excellent opportunity for regional collaboration," said Cecil W. Osborn, city administrator for Springdale. "It provides our cities, villages, townships and county government with a forum in which they may come together and accomplish big-picture planning and long-term visioning."

The Planning Partnership, a collaborative initiative of the Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission, represents more than 80 percent of Hamilton County by area and about 90 percent of the county by population. Thirty jurisdiction members and 12 affiliate members comprise the advisory board charged with harnessing the energy and vision of its members for the collective good of the county.

"The Planning Partnership is a catalyst for positive change in Hamilton County," said Joe Sykes, Miami Township Trustee. "You know the old saying, 'If you're not part of the solution, you're part of the problem.' Hamilton County does have problems. And through the many hands and hearts and voices in the Planning Partnership, we are actively working on solutions."

Various programs tap and build on expertise, and members communicate often in a variety of formal and informal settings. This ongoing communication, this dialogue on the county, is what many members find most appealing.

"That, to me, is the most valuable aspect of the Planning Partnership," said Mayor Gary Blomberg of Montgomery, a member of the Partnership. "People downtown, people in Montgomery and people in Harrison all want the same thing: a safe, healthy, dynamic community. All of us

have common issues and goals. Together, I really think we can make a difference."

Online discussion groups, quarterly newsletters, regular meetings and forums, committee work and project teams ensure that the dialogue is constant and focused. It is vision in action.

"The Planning Partnership is now a vibrant and vital part of Hamilton County's future," said Ron Miller, who serves as secretary of the Planning Partnership and executive director of the Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission. "Through the Planning Partnership, this county is demonstrating that we can move as one, that the many wonderful and distinct communities within Hamilton County can act as one, that we can work as one. That kind of attitude unquestionably gets attention, and it gets results."

For information on how to join, log on to [www.planningpartnership.org](http://www.planningpartnership.org) or call 513-946-4500.

## Hamilton County Planning Partnership Member Jurisdictions

